



**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

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Transportation Planning Division

**MEETING MINUTES FROM MARCH 15, 2012 HIGH CAPACITY TRANSIT CORRIDOR WORK
GROUP MEETING**

To: High Capacity Transit Corridor Work Group
From: Jim Maslanka, City of Alexandria, T&ES; Steve Sindiong, City of Alexandria, T&ES
Meeting Date: March 15, 2012
Time: 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
Meeting Location: Patrick Henry Elementary School, Auditorium
Subject: Transitway Corridor Feasibility Study High Capacity Transit Corridor Work Group Meeting #14
Attendees: **Corridor Work Group:** Councilman Paul Smedberg (Co-Chair), Anna Bentley, Donna Fossum, Dak Hardwick, Poul Hertel, John Komoroske, Nancy Jennings
City of Alexandria staff: Richard Baier (T&ES), Jim Maslanka (T&ES), Steve Sindiong (T&ES), Karen Callahan (T&ES), Jeff Farner (P&Z), Pat Mann (P&Z)
Consultants: David Whyte (Kimley-Horn), Erin Murphy (Kimley-Horn), Amy Archer (RK&K)
Council Present: Councilmember Del Pepper
Members of the Public: 30 citizens signed in

Agenda

1. Introduction
 - a. Opening Remarks
 - b. Distribution of February 16 meeting minutes
 - c. Meeting Objectives and Goals
 - i. Review Preliminary Recommendation
 - ii. Preferred Recommendation for Corridor B
2. Corridor B Final Analysis
 - a. Recap of CWG Input for Corridor B (from Feb 16 Meeting)
 - b. Bicycle Connectivity Options
 - c. Preliminary Corridor B Recommendation
 - d. Summary of Benefits and Impacts
3. General CWG & Public Comment
4. Selection of Preferred Alternative

5. Logistics and Next Steps
 - a. Transportation Commission Public Hearing
 - b. Council Public Hearing

Summary of Discussion

Introduction

- Goal of the meeting:
 - Richard Baier, T&ES, noted that the goal of the meeting will be to review the final analysis that was conducted for Options 1 and 3, including the recommendations for bicycle facilities, and for the Corridor Work Group to make a recommendation to forward to the City Council.

February 16, 2012 Minutes

- John Komoroske moved approval of the February minutes. The motion was seconded by Donna Fossum and approved. Dak Hardwick and Nancy Jennings abstained from voting, because they were not present at the February meeting.

Corridor B Final Analysis

- Presentation by David Whyte, Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc.
- High Capacity Transit Corridor Work Group (CWG) Comments
 - ***Councilman Paul Smedberg***
 - Asked if Eisenhower Avenue was considered for a bicycle connection.
 - When redevelopment near the Landmark Mall begins to occur, there will be opportunities to improve the infrastructure, especially for bicycles.
 - Recommend that staff bring back more detailed information on bicycles, pedestrians and safety, when the recommendation is brought to the Planning Commission and Council, especially regarding the intersection of Duke Street at Taylor Run Parkway.
 - ***Anna Bentley***
 - Suggest that the consultant prepare an exhibit that shows enhanced pedestrian crossings across Duke Street.
 - Reversible lanes have an operational challenge, but can work
 - For bicyclists, there is an opportunity to have a route for transportation, and a route for recreational riders. Having a facility along Duke Street works for those bicyclists using it as a transportation corridor.
 - Agree with the recommendation.
 - ***Donna Fossum***
 - To the extent that a bike facility on Duke Street would impact property, don't want that to happen. Want bicycles off of Duke Street.
 - Concerned about pedestrians – are we safely separating pedestrians from the street? Also important to consider how to allow pedestrians to safely cross Duke Street.
 - Concerned about the reversible lane(s) and the confusion it may cause to drivers.
 - Agree with recommendations if bicycles do not have an additional impact on property.
 - ***Dak Hardwick***
 - As a resident of Cameron Station, interested in what happens along Duke Street.

- Concerned about bicycle safety, especially in terms of crime. If we put bicyclists off of the main corridor, there may be an increase in the incidents of crime against bicyclists, especially if the facilities are not well lit.
- There is a large grade from CVS to the Landmark Mall.
- Would DASH and Metrobus be allowed to access the transit lane? **Answer:** Yes.
- Need to move to cleaner transit vehicles.
- With the reversible lane, there is a blind incline near the intersection of Jordan Street. Need to make sure that signage and engineering take this into account.
- Are we considering a streetcar for this corridor in the future, and is the facility being designed to accommodate a future streetcar? **Answer:** The project is not designing for streetcars, due to the difficulty in financing a streetcar operation along the corridor.
- The analysis shows that one size does not fit all. Corridor B has its unique conditions that warrant a different approach.
- Need to consider impacts block-by-block in the engineering stage.
- Agree with the recommendation.

○ ***Poul Hertel***

- Don't want to mix pedestrians and bicyclists on Duke Street
- Wanted clarification on the 89 parcels affected by the road widening.
- Important to protect the neighborhoods, in a tightly constrained area. Don't support putting bicycles on Duke Street.
- Transit should be reflective of the community and fit within the community. Need to minimize the impacts to residents.
- Suggest access management as commercial properties are redeveloped.
- Recommend starting with Option 1a, and moving to Option 3c, but moving the bicyclists off of Duke Street.

○ ***John Komoroske***

- Think it is fine to mix the pedestrians and bicyclists.
- More serious / commuter bicyclists will likely ride in the street.
- Like the recommendation by staff / consultant.
- If a reversible lane is not included to improve the transit, might as well not do the project.

○ ***Nancy Jennings***

- Agree with the recommendation with emphasis on pedestrian.
- Would like more specifics on the pedestrian facilities, especially near Witter Drive.
- Property access from Alexandria Commons is likely to redevelop – would like an opportunity for 3 lanes in each direction with a median.
- Eisenhower Avenue should be a separate issue from the recommendation.
- Feel that the majority of funding in the City's TIP is being allocated for transportation operations, rather than capital projects. **Answer:** Rich Baier, T&ES, noted that most of the funding in the City's TIP is toward design and construction of projects, and the acquisition of buses.

● ***Public Comment*** on Corridor B Final Analysis / Recommendation

- Enhanced pedestrian crossings need to be considered, especially at the transit stations.
- A better sidewalk is needed along the entire length of Duke Street.
- Concerned about removing bicycles from Duke Street – this is setting a dangerous precedent as it relates to the City's Complete Streets policy.
- Agree that there are constraints on Duke Street between Jordan Street and Quaker Lane.
- The tunnel beneath the rail tracks is to be permanently closed.
- Concerned about how to accommodate an on-street bike facility along Duke Street near the skate park.

- Concerned about a multi-use trail, and the right turn conflicts with vehicles.
- We are trying to fit a round peg in a square hole. The impacts to the property owners would destroy the neighborhoods, especially if we are only trying to service traffic during limited periods of the day.
- Are there three peak traffic periods? Don't understand which direction the traffic goes for the reversible lane. **Answer:** The reversible lanes would be configured to meet the peak periods.
- Want to ensure that residents from Taylor Run Parkway will still be able to access Telegraph Road. **Answer:** Vehicles coming south from Taylor Run Parkway will be able to access Telegraph Road.
- What may be a sliver of property acquisition by the City is significant to homeowners. We need more detailed maps shown to the residents. **Answer:** The project is still at a very early conceptual design phase, and the full impacts are not yet known.
- Don't want any pedestrian or bicycle improvements that result in property impacts.
- Signage (related to the reversible lanes) will add to the visual pollution along Duke Street and be confusing to motorists.
- Does the City have any intent to notify property owners? **Answer:** Once the project moves into design, the City would notify and meet with residents to review the impacts.
- There is a wooden wall adjacent to my property between Early Street and Floyd Street. Will this need to be removed? **Answer:** We don't anticipate an impact to the wall. There is a slight property impact at the corner of Early Street.
- What is the project timeline? **Answer:** Corridor B has the lowest priority of the three corridors. The beginning phase of implementing Option 1a is probably five years away, and the City would likely implement Option 3c after 2020.
- The time to notify the 89 property owners is now. **Answer:** Once the project moves into the 30 percent design stage, and we have more certainty on the impacts, we would notify residents.
- Eisenhower Avenue should still be considered for the dedicated transitway.
- What type of mode does the Landmark Mall prefer? **Answer:** The Landmark Mall developers have expressed high interest in a Bus Rapid Transit type of service.
- The serious bike riders will ride on the street. We shouldn't build a multi-use path that impedes pedestrians and dog walkers.
- What study has been done the cut thru traffic from Quaker Lane and Cambridge? As Duke Street becomes more congested, more people may shift to Quaker Lane. **Answer:** The study is not focused on cut-thru traffic. The Council will be considering budget for traffic calming as part of the budget process.
- Important to tie the project with a new signal at Witter Drive.
- How many bikers use Duke Street today?
- Is providing a reversible lane in front of the fire station a good choice? **Answer:** The transit signal priority that is planned for the corridor will benefit the emergency vehicles.
- There is a big difference between the cost for Option 1a and Option 3c. Is it realistic to anticipate the funding needed for Option 3c? **Answer:** The City will continue to seek federal funding for the project. The City has been successful in obtaining federal funding for other transit improvements over the past few years.
- Glad to see that a lot of outreach has been conducted with the community for this study. There are short range congestion issues and needs for Duke Street. Haven't seen any project that addresses these short term needs, or reducing cut-thru traffic along Taylor Run Parkway.

• **Motion for Corridor B Recommendation**

The following motion for a Corridor B recommendation was made by John Komoroske, seconded by Dak Hardwick, and unanimously approved.

"The combination of Duke Street Alternatives 1a and 3c, are the preferred approach for phased implementation of a dedicated transitway in Corridor B. Alternative 1a would be the first

phase of transitway implementation on Duke Street. It would create dedicated transit lanes in existing six-lane sections of Duke Street between Landmark Mall and Jordan Street and between Roth Street and Diagonal Road. In the remaining section of Duke Street between Jordan Street and Roth Street, transit would operate in mixed flow. A parallel off-corridor bicycle facility should be examined to accommodate bicyclists along Duke Street and improved pedestrian facilities would be provided at intersections and near transit stations. Preliminary implementation should prioritize enhanced pedestrian safety and improvements at Taylor Run Parkway.

Alternative 3c would be the subsequent phase of transitway implementation on Duke Street. It would build on Alternative 1a by widening Duke Street to provide a reversible lane between Jordan Street and Roth Street. The reversible lane would be configured to allow Duke Street to accommodate a dedicated transit lane in the peak hour and peak direction of traffic flow during the a.m. and p.m. peak periods along Duke Street. Alternative 3c should continue to examine a bicycle facility along Duke Street along with corridor-wide pedestrian improvements. However, the Work Group believes that bicycles should be accommodated in this corridor if studies demonstrate that the streetscape can still be enhanced”

Logistics and Next Steps

- The project team will hold public hearings with the Planning Commission and Transportation Commission in April, on the Corridor Work Group’s recommendation for Corridor B. Following input from the commissions, staff will bring the recommendation to the City Council in May, for approval.
- The future meeting dates will be posted to the project webpage.
- This is the last meeting of the Corridor Work Group, and we thank them for all of their hard work and effort on this important project.